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UNCLAS VIENNA 003246

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR IO/UNESCO - CROWLEY AND EUR/AGS - VIKMANIS-KELLER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SCUL ETRD AU UNESCO

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO AUSTRIA ON UNESCO CONVENTION ON

CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

REF: STATE 170909

This cable is Sensitive but Unclassified. Please treat accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Economic-Political Counselor delivered reftel demarche to Ilona Hoyos, the Austrian Foreign Ministry's head of UNESCO affairs. We reviewed U.S. concerns about the text of the preliminary draft convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, and urged Austria to support our position that the draft remain open for further negotiation.

¶2. (SBU) Hoyos said she participated in the last two negotiating rounds on the document. She had found discussions with the U.S. delegation to be "very fruitful." That said, with the exception of some minor textual changes which Austria has distributed in capitals, Austria considered the current draft to be the best outcome that such a large group of countries could achieve. There is both parliamentary and governmental support for the draft text in Austria, she added.

¶3. (SBU) Hoyos argued that there were many international legal mechanisms to safeguard culture, but UNESCO properly took on the task of developing "something readable." In the Austrian view, the text should now go to all potential parties for a vote.

¶4. (SBU) Concerning the relationship of the convention to other agreements, the Austrian position was that the Vienna Convention on treaties was sufficient protection against a hierarchy that would give the UNESCO convention precedence over other agreements. On trade issues, the WTO decided not to give an opinion, leaving the matter in UNESCO.

Brown